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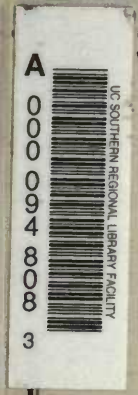

Address by

Rev. E. Victor Bigelow
Minister South Church
Andover, Mass.

November 22, 1920

SK-7

Before the

Boston Ministers Meeting
Pilgrim Hall

ELBERT H. GARY
71 BROADWAY
NEW YORK

December 1, 1920

My Dear Sir:

I have read your splendid address before the Boston Ministers Meeting at Pilgrim Hall, November 22d ultimo, and have exhibited it to several of my associates, each of whom expressed admiration. We are surprised that you, an entire stranger, should have taken the trouble to present the Interchurch World report in its true light. We are very appreciative and grateful.

Have you any objection to our having this address printed and widely circulated?

Hoping for an early reply, and with high respect and esteem, I am,

Very truly yours,

Rev. E. Victor Bigelow,
7 Locke Street,
Andover, Mass.

E. H. GARY.

SOUTH CHURCH
ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS
Organized 1711
Rev. E. Victor Bigelow, Minister

December 2, 1920

My Dear Mr. Gary:

I appreciate more than I can tell you the complimentary remarks which you and your friends have made about my address to the Boston Ministers. You are very kind to offer to have it printed and circulated; because there must be a lot of abler men whom you might easily commandeer to voice the truth that I have tried to express.

Indeed, I am quite nonplussed that no other churchman should have spoken with a bigger voice than mine.

Yes, you may print and circulate the address at your discretion.

Again thanking you for your generous appreciation, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

E. VICTOR BIGELOW.

MISTAKES OF THE INTERCHURCH STEEL REPORT

A DECENT Christian optimism will believe that good must come out of the labors of such a group of devout and beneficent souls as were appointed by the Interchurch Movement to inquire into the famous Steel Strike of September 22, 1919. If the wrath of men may be made to praise God, then certainly the mistakes of good men will yield as much.

Nevertheless such mistakes are deplorable, and if they bring shame and dishonor to us they should be repudiated for the sake of fairness.

I assume that you are not influenced by the advantage which might accrue to you for espousing either the side of the strikers or that of the corporation, and that your impartiality is like that of Brutus—"Set honor in one eye and death in the other and I will look on both indifferently." This impartiality, however, does not require you to abandon the standpoint of chivalry; for in the contests of life you are obligated to be especially attentive to the cry of the needy or the unprotected. But God never abandons justice in order to be merciful, neither should we.

1. The first mistake of the Interchurch Commission was in its blind espousal of the principle of "Collective Bargaining." It is a good principle but there are limits to its realm and there is serious danger of stepping over those limits into the abyss of error. That labor has the right to be represented by men of its own choosing is ethically self evident and the American Federation of Labor has spread its application over a tremendously wide area of industry with its three million members. Men who can't speak so well as they can toil may ask a professional labor leader to speak for them.

Men who can't think so clearly through the confusion of industry may appoint others to dictate the terms of their welfare and make contracts for them. These functions are effectively performed by labor unions of many kinds.

But the bright advantages of this collective bargaining seem to have blinded the eyes of our

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commission of inquiry so that they failed to see another principle equally important and more fundamental.

This other principle is the "freedom of contract"—that a man is free to do business with those of his own choosing. This is more fundamental than the other because freedom to act directly is more basic than the freedom to be represented. This principle is vital to all healthy competition and our government has broken into pieces huge corporations because they have compelled men to do business with them instead of honoring their freedom to do business with whom they choose. Anyone who appreciates our anti-trust laws must see the magnitude and the value of this human right but our Commission seemed to be strangely blind to it.

The Steel Corporation does not choose to do business with the American Federation of Labor. That Federation has an enormous influence among laborers such as the Corporation needs to employ, and it conceivably might be greatly to the advantage of the Corporation to deal with the Federation; but the Corporation claims that both its own interests and the welfare of its employees are best served by refusing to negotiate with the American Federation of Labor. It claims that its steel products can be and are sold at a much cheaper cost to the public, that it can and does pay higher wages and that it can and does afford vastly more rewards for individual effort and industry than would be possible if it should yield to the appeals of the Federation of Labor to negotiate with them.

Now we have to concede that the managers of the Steel Corporation know their own business and the capabilities of the American Federation of Labor even better than our Interchurch Commission know them; but even though the Steel Corporation be in error, that error is not to be punished by taking from it the freedom to choose or to refuse to negotiate with the Federation. Any intimidation or compulsion in that direction ought to be severely condemned by churchmen; but our Commission utters not one syllable in protest.

Indeed every effort of the Corporation to preserve that fundamental human right is

aspersed by the Commission as "wilful" or "arbitrary" or "autocratic" or "uncompromising." Every display of the right of collective bargaining looks good and glorious to them; but the display of the right to refuse to do business with an undesirable party is deplored and interpreted as malicious.

Suppose we apply this to affairs ecclesiastic. Our Government refuses to deal with the Pope at Rome even though he may have twenty millions of devotees within our control. Do we say that those people may exercise the right of collective bargaining through their representative, the Pope, or that our Government must do business with the Pope? Governments in Europe have received and have negotiated with papal ambassadors but we Americans affirm that the millions of American citizens who obey the Pope do not suffer any loss of their rights of citizenship by the refusal of our Government to do business with their church officials.

Or, shift the scene to the Boston police! Those poor men who were deluded by the good appearance of "Collective Bargaining" and joined the Federation of Labor just as similar deluded policemen in thirty-four American cities joined the Federation—they found that the municipality of Boston would not negotiate with that Federation in its dealings with its police. Samuel Gompers and many others, who love blindly the principle of collective bargaining, are still blaming Governor Coolidge for denying that principle. And this is the blame which our Interchurch Commission heaps up in heavy prejudice against the Steel Corporation upon every page of its long report. Can we approve our Commission for this while at the same time we are proud of Governor Coolidge for the opposite? If Governor Coolidge was right, then our Interchurch Commission has made a serious mistake.

2. The second serious blunder of our Commission is vitally connected with the first; but looks in another direction. It was their offer to mediate the strike last December fifth when the conflict was a little over two months old. Blessed are the peacemakers; but beware the job.

Our Saviour when he was appealed to by two brothers, who had a squabble over property

rights, declined to mediate, saying, "Who made me a judge and a divider over you?"

There are some tragic issues in which our offer to make peace is sheer effrontery. When some chivalrous minded congressmen at Washington last year tried to get the United States Government to offer mediation between Great Britain and Ireland, we were grateful for some sober minds that restrained them, showing not only our own unfitness but the sheer insult to the English government that was involved.

I suspect that the men in charge of the U. S. Steel Corporation are as anxious for the welfare of its employees as are the members of our Interchurch Commission and I believe that in any instance where the Corporation may have overlooked an employee's welfare the discovery of it by our Commission would be no offense to the Corporation even though its correction might be difficult or impracticable.

Mediation of that kind has been done doubtless by the Commission in this famous report of conditions in the Steel industry, and the correction of many injustices will doubtless follow in cases where it is possible; but that is not the kind of mediation which was offered on December 5th in Mr. Gary's New York office. They offered to mediate between the head of the Steel Corporation and the committee of the American Federation of Labor.

It was a proposal simply absurd, in view of the reiterated refusals of Mr. Gary to do business with the Federation emphasized by more than twenty years of conflict over the point with various labor authorities.

Mr. W. Z. Foster, the Secretary of the Federation's Committee, tells us that six separate and vastly more serious appeals had been made to Mr. Gary to negotiate with the labor unions. First, in a letter from Mr. Gompers; second, by the National Committee equipped with power to set a strike date; third, by the appeal through President Wilson to arrange a conference; fourth, by a resolution of the National Industrial Conference; fifth, by the Amalgamated Association of Steel Workers; sixth, by John Fitzpatrick through the Senate Committee. And now, with the innocence of teasing childhood the Interchurch Commission

comes to ask for the seventh time the same question.

I am not surprised that Mr. Gary, in his courteous way, diverted the conversation and almost humorously toyed with them—a man of less grace would have shown his annoyance, for this must have seemed to him a supremely stupid performance on the part of our Commission.

But the effect was a serious one upon the Commission; it gave them a stinging sense of the refusal to negotiate just as the labor unions had felt it. The Interchurch Commission feeling itself snubbed by Mr. Gary's refusal to deal with the A. F. of L. through them, commenced its study of the steel business with a strong prejudice against this aloofness, attributing to it almost all of the mass of evils discovered in the business and readily believing a lot of testimony secured from other malcontents who were disappointed in not having the unions recognized. The various chapters of the report are named with the patronymic "no-conference," as follows: "The Twelve Hour Day in a No-Conference Industry" "Wages in a No-Conference Industry" "Grievances and Control in a No-Conference Industry" "Social Consequences of Arbitrary Control."

The Commission seized upon one of Mr. Gary's words in his testimony before the Senate Committee to characterize what they regard as the prevailing evil of the entire business. Mr. Gary said "the Corporation during the war increased the wages many times voluntarily, arbitrarily." The word "arbitrarily" has a sinister sound in the ears of Americans and Mr. Gary qualified it by saying "but arbitrarily in favor of the workmen intending to be fair and reasonable and to treat the subject on the basis of merit. The largest percentages of increases have been made to those receiving the lowest wages." "We have taken into consideration the increases in our earnings and have intended to more than keep pace with the increased cost of living, which we have done, and during the war we have increased the wages eight times always voluntarily; there was never a single demand made." "We were influenced by the fact that our increased earnings permitted us to do it and we did take into account also the idea of giving

them what we conceived to be the employee's share in the prosperity, which we always do." (P. 171—Gary's testimony) Mr. Gary's formula in matter of wages was clearly expressed in his Trinity College address (June 23, 1919). "When there is a well grounded doubt in regard to wage rates, it should be resolved in favor of the employee." But Mr. Gary's "arbitrary" method in favor of the employee is twisted by our Commission report into "arbitrary" method against the employee.

It is an unfortunate word to use but it need not be soft-pedaled if the Commission cares to set it forth. In that case we have merely to estimate it in comparison with the other alternative, namely "Labor Union Conference." Are there no arbitrary decrees in the labor unions? Are there no cases where labor men are told the number of hours they shall work, the kind of trade they may learn, the particular employer they may or may not engage with? Wherever they decree a "Closed Shop" it means that no man can obtain employment in that shop except through and upon the terms and conditions imposed by the labor unions. He is compelled to join the union and to submit to the dictation of its leader before he can enter the place of business. If he joins the union he is then restricted by its leader, as to place of work, hours of work, and compensation, advancement in position with no regard for his merit, and sometimes by the decree of the union leader is called out and prevented from work for days or weeks when he has no real grievance, while he and his family suffer for want of the necessities of life.

The poor workman has no escape from arbitrary treatment under the operation of labor union conference, and the vast majority of the two hundred thousand employees of the U. S. Steel Corporation prefer the "arbitrary" treatment by the Corporation rather than the arbitrary treatment by labor unions.

But the Interchurch Report is quite unfair to Mr. Gary in calling him arbitrary and it has seriously misled so amiable a critic as the editor of our *Congregationalist* who says "Industrial justice and peace will be found only as the Gary policy is supplanted by a more

democratic, humane and righteous one. It may be that another and greater struggle than the 1919 steel strike will come before reactionary management will yield to right and reason." I would say to this editor, that it is for the very purpose of "right and reason" that Mr. Gary refuses to permit the U. S. Steel Corporation to be subjected to the control of an arbitrary labor union. He refuses consultation with the A. F. of L. because he is sure of a better conference with the steel workers than he possibly could get by means of that Federation. He finds out from his fellow laborers in that vast industry a great deal more accurately their desires and capabilities, than the labor unions could ascertain them. He has an army of men whose business it is to report regularly upon every phase of life that is concerned with the production of steel. There is an open invitation to any man or group of men from any department to appeal to the management for adjustment of any question. But the Corporation does not wait for these appeals; it has hundreds of employees whose entire work is to seek out and to supply the needs of employees before they are formulated.

The efficiency of these efforts on the part of the Corporation, really to confer with its individual employees, brings only the greater condemnation from our Interchurch Commission because when the need of complaints from the men is removed by this careful supervision, their failure to come up to the management is reported as a proof that no conference is allowed.

The Interchurch complaint that only minor questions and not wages and hours of employment were the substance of conference with the steel management is only partly true. The question of hours and wages has been made a specialty by the American Federation of Labor; but there is absolutely no proof that wages have been made any higher in other industries by the A. F. of L. than they are in the steel industry where this question is determined by the Corporation. In the steel works common labor got 46.2 cents per hour for the year 1919 while navy yard common labor was paid 44.5, nearly 5% less. Railroad section men got 37.2 cents and other yard men 37.4 or 20% less than steel men.

But the larger advantage of the steel men was not in the greater amount per hour but in their freedom to put in more time so that their week's pay of $34.19 was far ahead of that of the navy yard laborer's $21.36 or the R. R. laborer's $18.00 per week. Compared with the highly unionized building trades of New York where wages are the highest, the skilled and semi-skilled steel workers stood well on a par, for while their average of 78.4 cents per hour was a bit under the New York builders 83.5 cents, yet the total weekly earnings of the steel men were $51.74 per week as compared with the builders $36.74.

It is quite evident that the Gary method of paying wages truly consults the interests of the workmen not less but *more* than the labor union method does it.

The fact is that the union method could not come within reach of the Gary method in getting wages for its men if it were not for the raised prices of union-made goods that takes the increase out of the public. The Gary method enables the steel workers to get more pay without increasing the costs of the public. This is the great weakness of the union methods; they do not take into consideration the interests of the public, neither do they provide any impetus in the movement for production.

By their fruits ye shall know them!

Senator Kenyon's committee reported from their investigation of the Steel Strike (P. 10): "Few of the witnesses examined made any complaint as to wages * * * It is the opinion of the Committee that, broadly speaking, the employees of the steel industry at the time of the strike were fairly well satisfied with the wages received and that such question was not persuasive at all in any consideration of a strike."

This Senate Committee was not looking for any items favorable to the Steel Corporation and their deliberate judgment of the remarkable success of the Gary method of settling the question of wages ought to have convinced the Interchurch Commission if they had been fair minded.

It might readily happen that the fixing of wages without conference with a labor union would be tyrannically unfair to the men; but according to the Senate Committee's report such

was not the case in this instance and our Interchurch Commission has been fooled by its own over-estimate of the value of labor union conference in fixing wages.

While labor unions can be of immense value in some cases in gaining rights or privileges to laboring men as against unfair or dull employers, they can be an unbearable nuisance to a keen and fairminded employer who is eager to do for his workmen vastly more than the unions can do. The evident weakness of the prevailing union methods is that they fight against the employer and make exactions which cramp him and reduce the productive efficiency of the enterprise. While this often brings larger pay to the workers immediately concerned, it takes value out of the public and reduces the common good.

When we can find a man like Mr. Gary who is strong enough to resist all labor union compulsions and can keep his Corporation free to adjust wages and labor conditions to the highest standard in the world while keeping down the cost to the public, he is worth millions to us and we ought to have had an Interchurch Commission clear-eyed enough to see it.

One concrete instance of conference with steel workers illustrated Mr. Gary's attitude. The president of a subsidiary company reported a strike of a thousand or more men and said to Mr. Gary, "It is very easy for me to fill this mill and I will proceed to do it. There was no reason for their going out." But said Mr. Gary, "Have you taken pains to find out; has anybody spoken to you?" "No," he replied, "I have not received any complaint whatever." "Are you sure," said Mr. Gary, "that no complaint has been made to anyone? You had better go and find out before you decide what you are going to do." He went back and found from the foreman that a committee had come and complained about three things that they thought were wrong. The subsidiary president said the things were not very important. Mr. Gary said, "That is not the question. Are you wrong in any respect? It seems to me you are wrong with respect to two of those things but not the third. Now you go right back to your factory and just put up a sign that with reference to those two

particular things the practice will be changed." (P. 36 Gary's testimony.)

Our Interchurch Commission makes nothing of the stern insistence by Mr. Gary that the steel officials shall yield any point of justice, however slight, that is fairly claimed by the men; but the Commission takes offense that a sign should be put up instead of calling the committee into the office to make the concession. Such picayunish judgment by our representatives ought to bring the blush of shame to us all. They try to make it appear that the use of a sign to give notice symbolizes a universal autocracy; but it is just the common-sense method that any factory employs. The "collective-bargaining" bug seems to have disordered their common-sense.

Now just what is the proper sphere of "collective bargaining" in making any industry successful, is worth a bit more of inquiry than our Commission gives it. The great and central object of an industry is to produce merchandise; for that the capital is invested, for that the laborers are assembled, and for that the customers pay. But the problem of production is not tackled by the American Federation of Labor. They openly advocate a reduced production. They pass decrees for the purpose of hindering production. Why then, in the name of common sense, should they be taken into partnership or consultation by an industry whose chief aim is to produce? They might desire to come in as a parasite to devour part of the product or they might act as a hindrance or brake, but this negative functioning is a very secondary sort and one that may be abundantly supplied by the natural laziness of men and by the many hindrances that are inevitable in getting anything out of Nature.

It is true that the A. F. of L. being interested in the welfare of employees might have some propaganda to urge upon the management of any industry inasmuch as men are the means or agents of production, but the management of the men in the task of production must be in the hands of those who have undertaken to produce and not in the hands of those who hinder production. Perhaps the A. F. of L. may adopt a program to facilitate production, after

its consultation during the past week with Mr. Hoover and thus it might become a fair candidate for the councils of producing industries, but that is a prospect for the future merely.

Much the same statements would apply to the offer of the Interchurch Commission to mediate or to give counsel in the steel industry. The Commission is interested in the welfare of men but it has given no hostages to the cause of producing steel and its genius is therefore inapplicable. The Steel Corporation is responsible for its treatment of men engaged in its work of production and woe betide that corporation if it harms them or withholds their rights during the process of production; but its essential job is to produce steel and for that end its own management must be responsible. The advice and good will and productive genius of all the men employed are all necessary, but the responsibility of using that advice, the methods of gaining and keeping that good will, and the success in utilizing their productive genius, these are the cares of the managers of the Steel Corporation. The chief burden of failure will fall upon them and the chief reward of success will accrue to them. It is plain to any practical mind that the natural sort of control in this kind of activity must be centralized control. Our Commission is grievously at fault in stigmatizing this control as "militarized." It is indeed systematized to the high degree that accounts for the supreme success of the greatest producing organization in the world; but it is not military in the sense that it is an engine of destruction, neither is it military in the sense of being a concatenated system of command and obedience. That military organization is also highly centralized does not justify our Commission in calling the steel control by the opprobrious epithet "militarized." The organization is not for the purpose of exercising control but for the purpose of producing steel.

Inasmuch as the product is measured by dollars, it is proper and fit that the Finance Committee should head up the producing control.

Prof. Carlton Parker in the January *Atlantic* made some keen observations about the danger of a finance committee being too far separated from the individual human producer, leaving a

wide seed-ground for sowing discontent in industry; but this danger is not to be overcome by taking control out of the hands of the Finance Committee, as our Commission would recommend.

The best way is to humanize the finance committee as it has been done with remarkable success in the personality of its Chairman, Mr. Gary.

There is no doubt that the Finance Committee needs to know how the men feel in regard to hours and wages and conditions of work and it will fail in proportion as it ignores these facts. Some such method of securing shop sentiment as the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company has adopted might aid them, or the American Federation of Labor might aid them in finding these facts, or the Steel Corporation might spurn both of these methods and find a better method for itself. The brutal necessity of meeting the needs of the men is always there and unswerving financial penalties await upon any failure to ascertain and to keep the good will of the men. Collective bargaining may or may not be used, that is wholly secondary, the prime necessity is that the Steel Corporation or any industry must be autonomous, it must run its own affairs if it would reach the highest perfection.

In the task of meeting the needs of its employees the Steel Corporation has spent more money and exercised a wider range of sympathetic interest than any other corporation and is out of sight beyond all the highly unionized industries like railroads, building trades and mines.

Mr. Close, the Manager of the Bureau of Safety, Sanitation and Welfare reports the expenditure of nine million dollars a year for the last eight years upon such substantial benefits as:

Dwellings at low rental . . .	27,553
Churches	25
Schools	45
Swimming pools	11
Playgrounds and fields	334
Drinking fountains	3,077
Emergency stations	286
Base hospitals	25
Surgeons and Physicians . . .	274
Teachers and Instructors . . .	222
Pensions	2,940

—and great quantities of other helps and conveniences. Now none of these things are pro-

vided by "Collective bargaining" and our Commission refers to them with the same slur that many labor unions use in these words, "The Corporation's executives, in order to meet the Corporation policy, are forced to grind the faces of the Hunkies and to trust to welfare to salve the exacerbations." Even Prof. Graham Taylor, who apparently doesn't see the root of the Commission's bitterness, reproves them squarely for this insult.

If the cost of all these conveniences were used for extra wages as the sinister critics demand, it would add a cent and a half an hour on the average; which means practically nothing compared with the vast utility of these common conveniences that all may enjoy and that save the lives of thousands every year. All these things come from the "no-conference" policy of the Corporation and they would be impossible to provide without raising the price of steel if the A. F. of L. were consulted.

Whenever the management provides for the welfare of the men or rewards any of them for exceptional service such favors are readily interpreted by its foes as a kind of bribery and all forms of stock owning or insurance and other privileges are condemned by those who want to keep the ranks of labor solidly arrayed for battle against the employer. It is plainly necessary in case of war to keep your soldiers from hobnobbing with the enemy, and labor unions may be wise in this policy for there seems to be a fundamental antagonism between capital and labor regarding what portion of the product shall fall to each. But while we know that this antagonism has made a state of industrial war in which labor unions have developed into armies, is it not possible to compose this antagonism without the necessity of war in special instances? If the workers in the Steel Corporation can get their share of the product without an industrial war, then an army or labor union will not be needed, and it will be perfectly appropriate for men to receive favors and for the Corporation to extend welfare in a multitude of forms without the charge of bribery.

In such a case the Corporation in binding to its cause most of the skilled workers and in offering to all of its employees many items of

partnership such as stock ownership, is not engaged in a selfish scheme but is doing more for its employees than a war could do, successfully fought by labor unions.

The Interchurch Commission is not justified in its insinuations that the Steel Corporation by all its safety, sanitation and welfare work is engaged in undermining opposition for the purpose of subjugating its employees.

3. The third mistake of vital import made by our Commission was in assuming the functions of a prosecuting attorney when they were only a "commission of inquiry." They were granted ten thousand dollars to ascertain facts of the steel industry to lay before our churches so that we might judge intelligently; but they decided at once that the Corporation was guilty and then proceeded to find facts that would prove it.

The result is a bookful of testimony that is untrustworthy and lopsided. If you ask why the Corporation can't present the other side, the answer is the report is so manifestly unjust that it will rot of its own corruption and no one will believe it except those who desire to knock the Steel Trust. Even Professor Graham Taylor deplores the too free use of the committee's bias in presenting their evidence.

Throughout the book it is their practice to refute or to discount testimony from the Corporation and to accept without question quantities of aspersion from disgruntled ones.

A salient case of this interesting perversion is their report of discharges for unionism. (P. 208 ff.) Mr. Gary flatly denied to the Senate Committee that workmen were discharged because they belonged to unions, saying; "If that has been done in a single case or a few cases, it has been contrary to our positive instructions and the foreman would be disciplined if he disobeyed these instructions a second time. * * * It is possible, though I do not think probable, that some foreman may in some instances have shown some feeling against a union man when he discovered it. I do not know of any such case. It would be directly contrary to our orders, contrary to all our reports and contrary to the information I have. I have denied the proposition emphatically. It is not true."

The Commission retorts in the next line "It

is true," and they say they have "special evidence consisting of hundreds of signed statements by steel workers who were discharged."

Now isn't that simple! Do you suppose that a labor agitator when discharged for agitating would miss an opportunity of making a signed statement that he was discharged for being a member of a union. Out of the thousands of union men in the employ of the Corporation is it any wonder that hundreds of them might become agitators when Mr. Foster started his campaign of boring from within? Who knows how many hundreds of rabid disturbers were deliberately sent by Mr. Foster into the steel industry to prepare for that campaign a year before the strike was called.

For every one who said he was discharged for belonging to a union there are hundreds of union men still remaining in the steel industry without any question whether they belong to a union or not, which is very good evidence that it is agitation and trouble-making rather than union membership that accounts for the discharge.

Another case of the Commission's serious untrustworthiness in regard to "facts" is in their statement about wages. They say in the report (P. 90), "Half of the strikers interviewed by the Senate Committee talked about low wages."

But the Senate Committee says (P. 10 of Senate Report 289), "The question of wages is not involved in the controversy. Few of the witnesses examined made any complaint as to wages." Did I say that somebody lied? No, I say simply that we cannot depend upon our Commission for the facts even though we paid them $10,000 to get the facts.

The squint of judgment that disabled the commission of inquiry is illustrated clearly in their diagnosis of the reasons for the strike. They questioned some five hundred steel workers carefully, besides talking with leaders on both sides and report that "the causes of the strike lay in the hours, wages and control of jobs and in the manner in which all these were fixed." (P. 11.) Their method of reaching this conclusion is naively confessed but is truly amusing. Suppose you had tried to find out the causes of the recent world war by questioning five hundred soldiers on both sides and their

leaders, you would have found the true causes about as well as they found the causes of the strike.

The Senate Committee says plainly that "the question of wages is not involved in the controversy" and the question of an eight-hour-day was the least of four contributory causes. It says (P. 11), "The underlying cause of the strike is the determination of the American Federation of Labor to organize the steel workers in opposition to the known and long-established policy of the steel industry against unionization."

In substantial agreement with this is the cause asserted by Mr. Fitzpatrick viz: Mr. Gary's refusal to confer with the committee claiming to represent the employees.

In similar fashion Mr. Gompers tells the cause, "The denial of the right of the employees to be heard by their own representatives," meaning the American Federation of Labor.

But most illuminating of all is the disclosure of Mr. Wm. Z. Foster in his own book on the Great Strike. Let me quote him. (P. 17.) "But as the war wore on and the United States joined the general slaughter, the situation changed rapidly in favor of unions. The demand for soldiers and munitions had made labor scarce; the Federal administration was friendly; the right to organize was freely conceded by the government and even insisted upon; the steel industry was the master-clock of the whole war program and had to be kept in operation at all costs. The gods were indeed fighting on the side of labor. It was an opportunity to organize the industry such as might never again occur." These words are plain and we know what Mr. Foster meant by "organizing an industry;" it meant, to secure for the A. F. of L. a controlling power in the management of the Steel Corporation. Mr. Foster seizing this golden opportunity readily persuaded the officials of the A. F. of L. to launch "one mighty drive to organize the steel plants of America." June 10-20, 1918.

Now we know well enough that there are always causes for complaint—wages, hours, customs, management, personal grudges—and especially at the close of our great war the spirit of

violence and rebellion was so abundant as to make it easy for any disturber to raise a following.

All of these causes came trooping along to support Mr. Foster's purpose of compelling the Steel Corporation to submit to some requirements of the A. F. of L. It didn't need to be a closed shop; it needed to be only some item of conference between Mr. Gary and the officers of the A. F. of L. that would prove to workmen everywhere that the Steel Corporation would mind the behests of the A. F. of L. It is strange that our Commission could not discern this root cause which the Senate Committee declares, which Mr. Fitzpatrick, the chairman of the strike and Mr. Foster the chief organizer of it both confess, which Mr. Gompers on one side and Mr. Gary on the other agree was the cause of the strike.

It is in this particular that our Interchurch Commission resembled the Boston Commission of Thirty which inquired into the police strike and reported the causes of it to be bad station houses, long hours, short wages, and a lot of other wicked things; but our Governor with simple Yankee candor passed by all these causes and picked out this—that the American Federation of Labor was being intruded as a factor in the management of our police; and that he called treason.

But our Interchurch Commission's failure to see the true cause of the strike is followed by misjudgments about hours and wages which they mistook for the main cause. Somebody in our Federal Council of Churches whether Mr. Tippy, the Chairman of the Social Service Commission I know not, but somebody is responsible for an industrial heresy about hours of work that may have poisoned the judgment of our Interchurch Commission. It is the first principle of their industrial creed and it advocates gradually and reasonably reducing "the hours of labor to the lowest practicable point." This is the hobo's doctrine. It glorifies leisure and denounces toil. How could it ever be advocated by a confessed follower of the ceaseless Toiler of Galilee who said in reply to his critics that objected to his Sunday work, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work!" The extent to which this heresy has spread amazes us. It was

adopted by our last Congregational Council in its industrial platform and is published by our social service department throughout the country. It ought to bring the blush of shame to every one of us that believes in work as the greatest means of character building and as the demonstrator of the highest manhood. How can we advocate reducing work to its lowest practicable point if we have left in us any of the spirit of him who said, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work."

Now what about the eight-hour-day which seems to be so popular an ideal in these times and is so glorified by our Interchurch Report? It may be that eight hours is a good standard day for reckoning a unit of toil; but this world would have empty larders and raw comforts if men didn't work more than eight hours in twenty-four. Nature is so obdurate and man's needs are so many that it is physically impossible to produce what we need in those hours. The ordinary man who works eight hours in paid employment puts in several more hours in making his home. Men who succeed in reaching the places of power and influence are usually those who keep on working after their companions have quit.

One of the good things in the steel industry and in some others which have not been too heavily unionized is the freedom afforded to some strong and industrious men more nearly to fill their capacity for work and to reap the corresponding reward. Excessive toil is suicide; but many generations of experience have proved that men have healthy capacity for more than eight hours toil and our Interchurch Commission is far too easily captivated by the labor union slogan of eight hours and far too ready to condemn the Steel Corporation for allowing more than half its men to work beyond the eight and ten hour stint. It is clear that most of the steel men who work the long hours for extra pay prefer to do it even to the extent of twelve hours which enables them to make an even shift in processes that are continuous for twenty-four hours. But it may be that the evils connected with the twelve-hour shifts overbalance the benefits; in which case a change of

some sort will have to be made; but that change will be safer in the hands of the men who are running the steel business than it would be in the hands of the Interchurch Commission or in those of the A. F. of L., which is in bondage to an eight-hour dogma.

In the Commission's condemnation of the low wages paid to the unskilled steel workers there is both tragedy and humor. They charge the Corporation with cruelty for paying unskilled workmen only $1,466 a year upon which to support a family; claiming that it is less than the minimum subsistence of a family of five.

Prof. W. F. Ogburn, employed by our Government as an expert, fixed the minimum subsistence cost for an American family of five at $1,575 for the year 1919; but there are 57,000 unskilled U. S. steel workers who are paid but $1,466 a year. You might think a group of churchmen like our Commission would feel the tragedy of this deficient pay; but the tragedy is turned to sardonic humor when we remember that 90,000 preachers in our land who are skilled workmen receive only $800, $700 or $600 a year. They manage to subsist upon one half of what Prof. Ogburn says is minimum subsistence.

Are the preachers' families any less worthy than the Poles, the Serbs, and Syrians that work for the steel trust? Is their crushed ambition any less pitiable? And if we churchmen accept this report we shall confirm the Commission's judgment against the Steel company for treating their employees not one half so shabbily as we treat the paid workmen of our churches. I hear the words of the Carpenter of Nazareth saying to us, "Ye hypocrits, first cast out the beam out of your own eyes, then ye shall see more clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye."

4. The fourth and last blemish upon the work of our Commission to which I will call your attention is their ignoring of the unjustifiable buccaneering practised by the A. F. of L. in its attack upon the Steel Corporation. It was deliberately planned that twenty-four different trade unions should join in the campaign and share the booty in the many thousands of members to be gained by unionizing the steel works at $3 a member. They underwrote a fund

of a quarter of a million dollars and set an army of spies and borers at work in all the factories, whose business it was to alienate as many workers as possible, and to make such a stampede of the mass of illiterate unskilled workmen that the Steel Corporation would be made helpless and ruined unless it yielded to the demands of the Federation.

Now the A. F. of L. is somewhat aristocratic as compared with the I. W. W. or the Workers International Industrial Union, and it usually seeks for members among the skilled workers. But the treatment of skilled workers by the Steel Corporation is so much better than they could get from the A. F. of L. that they were a poor quarry for the organizers, and Mr. Foster, who was formerly an I. W. W., persuaded the Federation to make overtures to the foreign, illiterate and unskilled masses.

Mr. Foster's conception of the task was thoroughly military and his naive account of it shows his complete confidence that the guardians of peace and of citizens' rights would permit all the ruthless ravages that he planned. He speaks of his "policy of encirclement," "taking up outposts," "flank attacks," "feints" to cover "secret attacks," and many other items of military strategy, indicating a clear purpose of violence up to the limit permitted by law, and then some.

Does any one doubt the wisdom, justice and necessity of a spy system on the part of the U. S. Steel Corporation in sheer self defense? How could a victim of such attack do any less than to use all legal means of resisting the violence without, and the incendiary foes within?

Bear in mind that the source of all this was the outside committee of the A. F. of L. and their purpose was to compel the Steel Corporation to do business with them, and they were spending over two hundred thousand dollars to damage the Corporation to the extent of millions of dollars or to render it helpless.

Now, such a purpose of buccaneering was charged to the Standard Oil Company some years ago, because they tried to compel certain other oil companies to do business with them. It was charged that they would do every damage permitted by law, secretly, openly, by

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hired mercenaries a would readily forgive any henchmen for doing violence beyond the law in their determination to do business with any obstinate oil company. Now one of our famous churchmen, the late Washington Gladden, even before these charges were legally proved, stirred up thousands of our fellow churchmen and social reformers to denounce the Standard Oil Company.

Where are these altruistic champions of human rights who condemn such buccaneering within the limits of the law because it violates fundamental human rights? Indeed if I mistake not every one of our Interchurch Commission belonged to that select band of our sainted Gladden; where are they standing in the presence of this gigantic campaign of buccaneering?

I charge them, everyone, with recreancy from their high principle of defending the unwritten rights of men because they have excused and condoned the uncriminal violence of the American F. of L. in their deliberate and unjustifiable Steel strike. In the name of decency the Interchurch Commission's report must be repudiated!